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THE ROMANCE OF A BOOK-STALL.

AMONG all London shops, there are none which, as it seems to me, contain more sentiment than those half-in-the-street, half-out-of-it establishments, with a sharp little boy on guard over their external treasures, lest too ardent book-fanciers should forget to pay for what they take. Absorbed in some beloved author, it is quite possible, you see, that a literary gentleman may move away with the book in his hand, or even thrust it into his pocket. Large editions may go off very rapidly in this way—and in another. ‘Persons will wait *on all-fours* just round that corner,’ said a book-stall keeper near Leicester Square, yesterday, in answer to my question as to whether he ever lost his exposed wares, ‘and, so to speak, “stalk” my property; wretched little ragged urchins, who only get pence for what they steal, and who know that it is not worth my while to appear against them at the police-office. They watch their opportunity when my boy is away or asleep, and crawling under the shelf yonder, abstract a volume or two without any reference to the contents. It may be Burn’s *Justice*, or the *Laws against Petty Larceny*.’

‘And what do you do?’ inquired I.

‘Well, I keep as good a look-out as I can through those crannies—the books are placed in that semi-detached manner on purpose—and when I catch the young rascals in the act, I drop *this* into them.’ He took up an enormous moth-eaten volume, labelled ‘*Jones’s Theology*’, and weighing about twenty pounds. ‘This reverend gentleman, sir—a sound divine in his day, although now a little dilapidated, from being used as a missile weapon—if not a convincing moralist, makes a very considerable impression when dropped on the small of the back, and I keep him for that especial purpose.’

This book-stall friend of mine, like most of his class, is a philosopher; a musty, fusty sort of one, it is true, but as agreeable an old fellow as you will find within the next six streets. He has horn-rimmed spectacles, which are always stuck on his forehead like a fillet, and is otherwise

somewhat unfashionably attired, but he is possessed of an immense amount of old-world information. His habit of taking up the volumes at hazard, and dipping into them all day long, causes his mind to resemble one of those ancient screens made up of heterogeneous scraps from newspapers. He cannot continue upon any subject for more than a few sentences, but he will rove, if you encourage him, from love to politics, from science to sporting matters, in a quarter of an hour. This is, however, only when you have got to know him; at first, he always pays you the compliment of supposing you are a Bibliomaniac, and regales you with a spread of Old Editions, in unreadable type. He has none of the vulgarity of retail commerce about him: he does not push his wares, and is equally civil whether you become a purchaser or not. The nature of his calling, although humble, raises him immeasurable mental degrees above the linen-draper next door, who comes to business every morning in his own brougham; he holds frequent converse with intelligent persons, and the apathy which continuous study might perhaps otherwise engender is warded off by the necessity of his dropping into these street-Arabs with Jones, D.D.

Besides the Arabs, he now and then suffers from the depredations of persons who should know better—broken-down ushers, university-men who have gone to the dogs, and who take care to select volumes that are really valuable. Then he very reluctantly appears against them before the magistrate; and, when the pitiful life-story of the culprit is disclosed (as generally happens), the prosecutor, says the newspaper report, ‘expresses a wish that the case may be leniently dealt with,’ for a very kindly hearted man is my friend of the book-stall; and I don’t believe he drops *Jones* exactly upon the small of the back, but probably a trifle lower. All gentlemen of his profession must be good-tempered; otherwise, they could never endure to see folks take up their wares, and after reading as much as they please, lay them down again, and pass on. I think they would be quite justified in putting some limit to this gratuitous entertainment: they might allow ‘ten

minutes for literary refreshment,' and not permit it to be exceeded. Moreover, the same student should not enjoy himself thus twice. The vendors of sweetmeats do not permit passers-by to suck their lollipops (as economical school-boys use), replace them for the time, and recommence on the ensuing day.

For my own part, I like this sort of out-of-door reading exceedingly; but I never practise it until I have become a client of the establishment—until I have been made free of the place by buying something. Thenceforward, I look upon it as a pasture-ground—‘meadow of margin, with rivulet of text’—into which I may turn myself to graze whenever I will. It is well to remember the fate of Mr Brownlow in *Oliver Twist*, and be careful of the contents of one’s coat-tail pockets; but, otherwise, the pleasure is without alloy. It is the true ‘contemplative man’s recreation.’ A canvas awning shields me from the heat; the roar of the street behind me becomes a soothing murmur, like bees about the limes. As a swallow on a lake’s breast, which does but wet its wing into the wave, and then away, so I dip into the literature that lies before me: ‘*Juvenilia; or, a Collection of Poems written between the ages of twelve and sixteen*, by J. H. L. Hunt, late of the Grammar-school of Christ’s Hospital; 1803.’ The poems themselves are little better than the generality of youthful verse—mere echoes of the great singers—but then this is the first book of dear Leigh Hunt. I think, of all British authors, that writer has made the most personal acquaintances. He talks to us, holding us by the hand, as it were, and smiling, and is evidently so desirous to please: so anxious, too, we should share in his pleasures, and love what he loves; we seem to have been his friends for years. There is much unintelligible stuff talked now a days about our want of ‘sweetness and light;’ but if ever man possessed those two attributes, and dispensed them among his neighbours, it was pleasant Leigh Hunt. If he was graceful even to fastidiousness, that is an error which, in these days, does not seem likely to spread. I daresay the lad was proud enough of this first book of his, and read all his own lucubrations in print with exquisite satisfaction; although, a few years afterwards, he must have pronounced them sad rubbish. The volume has ‘third edition’ upon it, it is true; but then it was published by subscription. A list of nearly a thousand ‘subscribers to the third edition’ is annexed; and it is this list which is the most noticeable portion of the little volume. What interest must have been used to secure such patronage to a *third issue of this Juvenilia!* Half the House of Lords and almost all the bench of bishops seem to have patronised the young gentleman, little foreseeing what a rod in pickle they were preparing for their own backs. The remarks appended to some of their names are the only characteristic writing in the book—nothing in the poems foreshadows the enemy of privilege, and the champion of independent thought.

At the head of the ‘B’ subscribers appears ‘His Grace the late Duke of Bedford, the disinterested patriot-promoter of useful science, benefactor of the industrious poor—the friend of man.’—Then we have ‘Master Henry Cutler, distinguished at a very early age for his musical abilities.—Hon. J. Dickenson, the celebrated author of the Farmer’s Letters, member of the American Congress—good as well as great.—Hon. James Fox, M.P., the

British Demosthenes.—Governor Franklin, formerly the able and faithful governor of New Jersey—son of the late ingenious Benjamin Franklin, *prime conductor* of the American Revolution, and principal *founder* of the United States—without his type in our day.—Edward Jenner, M.D., author of the most ingenious discovery of the eighteenth century.—University of Pennsylvania, the *alma mater* of the author’s father.—Right Hon. W. Pitt, M.P., the eloquent son of the illustrious Chatham, England’s successful war-minister.—Mr Prince, a favourite virtualler of the London citizens in St Mary Axe.—Benjamin Rush, M.D., Professor of Chemistry, whose tender care of the lives of his fellow-citizens, at the risk of his own, when the yellow fever raged, endears his name to every philanthropist in the Old as well as the New World.—Right Hon. Earl Stanhope, the disinterested and intrepid patriot, in times the most critical and eventful.—Henry Thornton, Esq., M.P., chairman of the Sierra Leone Committee, the poor man’s friend: ‘They who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever!’—Mrs Godfrey Thornton, daughter of the late benevolent Stephen Peter Godsir, Esq. of Southgate, a gentleman of great piety and suavity of manners.—Rev. William Vidié, the catholic and worthy successor, in Artillery Street Chapel, of the late eminent eloquent preacher of the love of God to man, Elhanan Winchester, the powerful maintainer of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over Satan and the kingdom of darkness, the savage Calvinist and hard-hearted Predestinarian.—William Wilberforce, M.P.—Samuel Whitbread, M.P.—Rev. Worthington, morning preacher in Hanover Chapel, Long Acre, one of the most solid, eloquent, and useful preachers in London.—And Nicholas Wahn, in his youth an eminent barrister at Philadelphia, and for some years past as eminent a preacher in the Society of Friends, a people simple, yet for the most part subtle.’ A very remarkable and varied list of subscribers this, and very characteristically commented upon by the young gentleman, ‘late of the grammar-school of Christ’s Hospital.’

Herein is the advantage of the book-stall, for *Juvenilia*, except as a curiosity, is not a book to be bought, but only to be dipped into. And so, as the bee balances himself on the edge of the cup of the flower, and sips and sips with a little boom of self-congratulation, I turn over book after book, mumbling half aloud what I wish to read, so as to overcome the tumult of busy life around me. The sentiment of which I spoke as especially belonging to book-stalls lies not, of course, in the printed contents of the volumes, which are the same as are to be found in every spick-and-span bookseller’s shop, but in what is written in the fly-leaves, or found stuck between the pages. The books are all second-hand here, and often and often I come across some touching record of the former possessor. No man, who has not discarded human feeling by becoming a professional critic, parts with a gift-book unless he is absolutely obliged. The price he gets, in comparison with the money-value of the volume, is so exceedingly small, that he would scarcely sell it unless he is in great straits. Whenever you chance, therefore, upon a presentation copy of any book upon a stall, you may conclude that the fact of it being there represents not only the poverty of its original possessor, but his sore need. If the book could speak, it would tell you some pitiful life-story. ‘To my dear Margaret, on

her Birthday, May 20, 1863,' is written in the first leaf of this little volume. It is Keble's *Christian Year*, and it has '1s. 6d.' marked upon it in large figures. My friend within there certainly did not pay more than a shilling for it. It is not surely possible that Margaret would have parted with so affectionate a memento as this for twelve-pence sterling unless she was in dire distress! How little the giver could have looked forward to its finding its way hither, and so soon too! She could never have quite forgotten him in five years, surely! To sell her *Christian Year*, too, a book which is to many Englishmen what a missal is to a good Catholic, that does seem strange indeed. I prefer to think the donor's dear Margaret is dead, and gone to heaven (as the nature of her studies leads us to hope), and that her effects having fallen into base hands, this little volume has been sold with the rest of them 'by order of the executors.'

Here is another sad fly-leaf: the name of the owner is scratched out—he had some moderate sense of shame, it appears—but immediately afterwards is written: 'The gift of his dear sister Mary, in the year of his blessed Saviour 1836.' It is Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, and considering the age of the volume, in excellent preservation. I am afraid the *mauvais sujet* who sold it, and did not take the trouble to erase that pious record, never 'dipped into' the book even so cursorily as I am doing now. Perhaps he felt the possession of it a reproach to his misdoings, and was glad to barter it for half-a-crown, which he subsequently spent in liquor. But what would be the feelings of 'dear sister Mary' should she come this way, and her eye light upon this volume? Would it be only another corroboration of her fears for the eternal welfare of that erring brother, long past to his account? Or would it wound her poor bleeding heart afresh to know that he had counted her love at less value than a few shillings?—and with all his faults, she had hitherto clung to the belief that he at least had loved his sister. Alas, alas! Another not impossible solution of the mystery is, however, that sister Mary was an offensively sanctimonious person, whose gift was by no means prized for the donor's sake, but got rid off at the very earliest opportunity. Lastly, I know nothing about it: both brother and sister may have been the most exemplary characters, and the book have got here through circumstances quite beyond the owner's control; but it is strange that the name of the proprietor should have been so carefully erased, while the wording of the gift was suffered to remain.

At least a fifth of the volumes on a book-stall are presentation copies, and about half of these are labelled 'with the autograph of the author.' Most of these are copies that have been sent for review, which the gentlemen of the press have not hesitated to part with for what they could get; and it must be owned that the authors whose handwriting appears within are not very well known to fame. The inscriptions are not those of personal friendship. 'With the author's kind regards' is the phrase which most approximates to an intimate relation. 'With the author's most grateful remembrances' seems to me to smack of that gratitude which is said to consist of a keen sense of favours to come: that book (you may depend upon it) was sent to a critic who had already praised the fellow, and might possibly do it again.

An imaginative mind might indeed find food for hours, pasturing merely upon these fly-leaves; but now and again I come upon even still more pathetic records. Dead flowers—the symbols of Who knows what dead Hopes, dead Loves?—marking some page which perhaps possessed a meaning for other eyes beyond what mine see in it; and once I came upon a 'keep-place,' very prettily worked, although the silk had long faded, on which was inscribed: 'Remember Nina.' The book in which it lay hid was Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and the exact place, curiously enough, was the seventy-fifth Psalm:

These mortal lullabies of pain

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief—then changed to something else,
Sung by a long forgotten mind.

The poet is certainly not yet forgotten; I wonder whether Nina is!

THE PRETTY BUTCHERESS.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

QUAKER makes, in the feminine, quakeress; and so, probably, butcher makes, in the feminine, butcheress. If it be so, very well; if not, never mind: let us invent the word butcheress for the occasion, and let us proceed further to apply it to the daughter of a butcher. If there be any reason why a butcher should not have a pretty daughter, perhaps somebody will be good enough to mention it to Mr George Brentwood, at No. 144 Eastminster Road 'over the water,' for he is the person who has sinned against reason. It is a fact, no doubt, that people do not generally connect butcher-meat and beauty (although the epithet 'beautiful' is not uncommonly applied to chops, steaks, and joints); but if they had gone, a few years ago, to 144 Eastminster Road, stood on the grating at the mouth of the cellars, and looked through one of the large panes of glass in the windows, they might have been induced to change their practice. It was all very well for the sheep to hang up by their hind-legs, all along one side of the shop, with their noses bleeding; they couldn't spoil the charm that surrounded fair Ellen. Chops in her hand looked as lovely as roses, and her touch imparted a grace to tripe. No wonder custom flowed in upon Brentwood; and if he had been a grasping man, he would have charged an extra penny a pound to the customers who were served by Ellen, for all preferred her to any one else. Old men and maidens, young men and children, and even crusty old women into the bargain, got served, whenever it was possible, by Ellen. But Mr Brentwood lost rather than gained by this tendency, for Ellen's great failing was to give overweight.

No one knew that better than Mrs Straddle, the cabman's wife, who went on the evening of a certain day, of a certain month, in a certain year of the nineteenth century, to get a chop for her sick husband.

'Well, Mrs Straddle,' sweet Ellen said, 'and how is your husband this evening?'

'He don't get no better, Miss Ellen, thank'ee,' answered poor Mrs Straddle with a sigh. 'His rheumatics is 'scruciatin', and the bile on his neck dros and dros enough to dror 'im out o' bed, por chap.'

'O dear! I'm very sorry; and he's out of work, too, all this time'—

'Yes, miss, that's bad; and with all my washin' and charin'—washin' my hands away, and charin' my legs to pieces—I can't hardly make enough for us two and the children.'

'Dear, dear! Well, what can I do for you?'

'Why, you see, Miss Ellen, the doctor says the old man must have his chop reg'lar, and so I want a nice chump chop; and I know you'll cut it as thick as you can, won't you, my dear?'

And Ellen cut such a chop (at the price of the thinnest possible) that Mrs Straddle retired chuckling, and Mr Brentwood took to remonstrating.

'You never weighed that chop, Ellen, I'm sure,' said he.

'No, I did not, father,' confessed Ellen demurely.

'Well, you should, my dear.'

'It was poor Mrs Straddle, father,' was the simple apology.

'Eh? Oh, well I'm sure I'm sorry for poor Mrs Straddle; but you know, Nelly, we can't afford to give chops away: you really must be more careful.'

'Very well, father,' said Nelly sorrowfully.

'You know, my dear, I don't want you to be hard on poor people, nor yet overparticular, nor—nor— Use your judgment, my dear; that's all I mean.'

For Mr Brentwood was a kind-hearted man; and so Nelly promised to use her judgment, which was worth very little when purchasers like Mrs Straddle came to buy.

Nelly's hair was amber-tinted. It was not huddled up behind in a sort of potato-bag, or elaborately twisted into the shape of a pin-cushion, but gathered up daintily, though loosely, into a simple knot; her eyes were gray, and thickly lashed; her nose was just the sort of nose you would have expected where it was; her mouth was exactly what you wanted. Of her hands, however, it may be stated that, though smaller might be found out of the ranks of the aristocracy, they were small enough, and shapely enough, and they had no dull, artificial-looking whiteness, but a decided tinge of delicate rosiness—a hint, as it were, that she had healthy blood in her veins. Of her figure, too, it may be said that it did not resemble a fairy's, but a well-made mortal maiden's; and though her feet might have shocked a fashionable Chinawoman, they were 'a joy for ever' to the bootmaker. But it was especially the goodness written on her face, beaming from her eyes, smiling on her lips, that bowed the hearts of all who saw her, in spite of her dress being bombazine; for that was the material she generally wore; and yet, so 'lovesome' was her 'mien,' that had she lived in the days of the susceptible King Cophetua, and had that royal personage (which is extremely improbable), entered

her shop to buy a pound of sausages or other savoury meat such as kings love, he would have made her an offer on the spot, always supposing that things had not already gone too far with 'the beggar-maid.'

CHAPTER II.

Now, it happened that, upon the very evening which has been spoken of, as George Fantom, Esq., Barrister-at-law, was passing down Eastminster Road, his eyes were somehow attracted to the shopwindow of No. 144, and 'more amazed than if seven men had set upon him,' he 'saw the maiden standing in the flaring gas-light. He stood still, supported himself with his nose against the glass, and watched the transactions of Mrs Straddle and Ellen. He saw Ellen cut off the chop, and with her own sweet thumb and finger place it carefully upon Mrs Straddle's cracked willow-pattern plate. He wondered if his own chops were as highly honoured. He pondered awhile, and then entered the shop just as Ellen had finished her conversation with her father.

'A mutton-chop, if you please,' said he to Ellen, 'from there,' pointing to where she had cut Mrs Straddle's.

She looked at him with some surprise; but taking a cloth in her left hand, lest he might object to the touch of her fingers, she cut off a chop, weighed it carefully, charged him accordingly, and asked quietly: 'Shall I put it in paper for you?'

'If you please,' was the answer; 'but pray, don't use that cloth. Do take it up as you did the old woman's.'

'Sir!' exclaimed Ellen bridling.

'The old woman's who just went out, you know,' continued Fantom imploringly; 'you didn't use any cloth for hers.'

Ellen looked just a little perturbed, for she considered the gentleman to be, to say the least of it, eccentric; she smiled slightly with amusement, blushed slightly with vexation, and then, with a tranquil: 'As you please, sir,' took up the chop exactly as she had taken up Mrs Straddle's, and wrapped it in a piece of newspaper.

'Oh, thank you, thank you, I'm sure,' said Fantom, as if he had received a personal favour which was gratifying and embarrassing at the same time. 'Do you think the—the bundle would go in my coat-pocket?'

'Really, sir, I can't say,' replied Ellen, and walked composedly into the counting-house, leaving her father to supply whatever else the customer might want.

Mr Fantom stood still, confronted by Brentwood, who, sharpening his knife encouragingly, and at the same time a little defiantly, upon his steel, asked: 'Anything else this evening, sir?'

'Eh? No, I think not—no more meat, thank you,' said Fantom; 'but, pray, do you know a Mr Renshaw hereabouts?'

'Rev. Renshaw, sir?'

'Yes; he's a parson.'

'O yes, sir, very well. Lives at 22 Warrington Street; first turning on the left after you pass the Green Dragon.'

'Thank you. Good-evening.'

'Good-evening, sir,' said Brentwood affably as he walked forward, sharpening his knife, toward the

customer, who retreated sideways from the shop, with his eyes directed towards the counting-house.

And so Fantom departed—but not to 22 War-rington Street. He had known perfectly well where the Rev. Mr Renshaw lived, and had come out on purpose to call upon him, and he had asked for information only for the sake of prolonging his stay in the shop, in case the amber-haired damsel might come out from or shew herself at the door of the counting-house. But Nelly had a good share of woman's intuition, and used it womanlike to the thwarting of men; so Fantom saw her no more that night.

Perhaps George Fantom, Esq., would not have been pleased had he heard the remarks that were made about him after he had left the shop; for Mr Brentwood had bluntly pronounced him 'drunk,' Ellen had surmised that he was 'a silly'; and Mrs Brentwood, when informed of his behaviour, had declared he was 'one of them impudent, good-for-nothing fellers.'

As it was, he soliloquised, whilst wending his way to his rooms in the Temple: 'Here am I, George Fantom, belonging to the ancient and honourable family of the Fantoms of Aisshire, running as usual after a shadow. It's impossible I can marry a butcher's daughter (for, of course, she *is* his daughter—and niece would be as bad); the Fantoms would rise from the grave and mock me. And yet the image of this pretty butcheress will haunt me even longer than that of the dark-eyed bakeress; and *that* haunted me for more than a year and a day, till it was exorcised by the practical wisdom of Renshaw. I should like to get his advice at once, but I can't call on him with a chop in my pocket. What to do with the meat, I hardly know; it's a curious memento to hang up in one's rooms, and it would soon become rather too odiferous. I'd give it to a beggar, if I could see one; but beggars are like policemen, and never appear when they are wanted. Besides, the beggar would be sure to think there was something wrong with it—that I had put poison in it just for a lark—for gentlemen are supposed to have queer ideas of a lark. By Jove, I'll cook it, and have it for supper; not that I'm the least bit hungry, but it's good practice to cook chops, and the touch of those fingers is far more appetising than Worcestershire sauce.'

So Fantom proceeded to mount with great agility the steps which led up to his chambers. The chambers were kept in disorder by a well-meaning but useless and dirty laundress, addicted to tipping (of course at the expense of 'her gentlemen'). Fantom had tried to cure her, by a measure which was certainly harsh, but justifiable on the ground that it could scarcely fail to be effectual. He deliberately, and in cold blood, placed in her way a quantity of cheap sherry and other wines. She fell into the cruel trap, tried each of the bottles in turn on one night (hoping to light upon something decent to drink), and her face ever afterwards told the tale of her sufferings and her disgust. She said nothing, but she regarded Fantom with an eye full of reproach, and it was clear that she considered the cruel trick had entitled her to drink (on the sly) any spirits she could find handy. When, then, Fantom arrived chop in pocket, and, observing his door open, walked a-tip-toe softly in, he found himself with a fine back view of the good dame as she stood with his bottle of V. O. P. (or very old pale brandy)

in one hand, whilst with the other she supported herself against the cellaret, and he heard her as she smacked her lips mutter: 'Drat them wines; give me brandy.'

'Don't drink it all,' said Fantom, suddenly going close up to her: 'I shall want a glass of brandy and water before I go to bed.'

Down on her knees dropped the petrified laundress, speechless from brandy, surprise, and fear.

'You can't deny it this time,' said Fantom; but the convicted laundress only moaned.

'Come, get up, woman,' continued Fantom; 'get up and go; and to-morrow I shall look out for a new laundress. Of course I shall keep you on until the end of the week, and pay you as usual; and after that I don't want to see your face again.'

The woman tottered to her feet, staggered away with an injured air; and then steadying herself by the door-handle, pursed up her mouth, and shook her head mournfully, as much as to say that her feelings were too big for utterance. At length her speech came slow and thick, and with a great deal of falsetto:

'Juz—yer—pleaz, zir; you—you—you know—bes, zir; you—try—to pizon—por old—por old—oman, and—then—you turn—er off—fur takin'—of a anec—anec—anecdote.' She probably meant 'antidote'; but the other word apparently relieved her mind best, for she smiled feebly, slammed the door, and fell by easy stages to the bottom of the staircase.

'The old hag knew I was going out,' muttered Fantom with a grim laugh, 'and thought I shouldn't be home till late. And I shouldn't have been, if it hadn't been for this,' he continued as he produced his chop, and prepared to broil it on his gridiron. He was by no means a skilful cook, even in the rudimentary matter of a chop; but having reduced his purchase to a tolerably cinder-like condition, he devoured it with much gusto. He then mixed himself a tumbler of brandy and water (for he had surprised his laundress just in time), lighted his pipe, and mused. He thought of all the cases known to him—from King Cophetna to his (Fantom's) friend Dawkins—of men who had married beneath them (as they say), and he wondered what sort of seizure—paralysis, apoplexy, epilepsy, and the like—would come upon the members of his family if they were to read in the first column of the *Times*: 'On the —th instant, at — Church, by the Rev. W. Renshaw, M.A., George Fantom, Esq., Barrister-at-law, son of the late Rev. G. Fantom, M.A., of Shapeless Rectory, Aisshire, and nephew of Sir Gossamer Fantom, Bart., of Fantom Hall in the same county, to (whatever her Christian name might be), daughter of Mr Brentwood, butcher, of 144 Eastminster Road, London, S.E.'

Then he went to bed, and dreamed that the ceremony was actually being performed; but by one of those singular mistakes which often occur in dreams, it was Renshaw who was putting the ring on Ellen's finger.

CHAPTER III.

The next two nights, Fantom felt himself drawn irresistibly towards the butcher's shop; but the moment he entered, Ellen retired to the counting-house, and Fantom's chop was cut for him, with much grimness and ostentatious flourishing of the knife, by Mr Brentwood in person. The way in which the butcher flourished his knife and eyed

Fantom the while, spoke volumes, and almost led to a breach of the peace; for Fantom could not help seeing that the butcher's pantomime expressed distrust and hostility, and making in consequence a good-natured remark, to which the butcher replied gruffly. The chops cut by the butcher, Fantom gave away to the first beggars he could find; and on the third night, determined to call upon the Rev. Mr Renshaw, make a clean breast, as he had done in the case of the dark-eyed bakeress, and receive some sound advice. As he sauntered down Warrington Street, he happened to look down one of the shabby side-streets, and saw a sight and heard a cry which caused him to break into a run. He ran about twenty yards down the side-street, wasted no time in words, but doubled his fist, and sent it straight into the jowl of a certain man, causing him to stagger against some area railings, and a sweet face to turn round with a scream of mingled fear and relief. The man having recovered himself, swore freely, and assumed a fighting attitude; but Fantom said: 'I can't wait now to give you your revenge, you blackguard: I must take charge of this young lady. And here comes a policeman, so, if you don't be off, I shall hand you over to him.'

The man hereupon slunk away; and Fantom, turning to his charge, said: 'I'm so glad I was near at hand. I saw you struggling with that blackguard, and I heard you cry for help. I knew you directly: you are Miss Brentwood.'

'Yes,' said Nelly, for it was she; and then she stammered: 'How can I thank you sufficiently, sir?' And then she added, half-crying: 'You'll think it so odd for me to be out alone at this time of night, and in such a place.'

'I only think it's very lucky for me,' said Fantom laughing; 'and now tell me where you are going, and if you will let me, I will be your body-guard!'

'O no, sir; thank you,' cried Nelly excitedly, for she was not quite sure that she hadn't escaped from Scylla only to fall a prey to Charybdis, a very much nicer monster certainly, but the more dangerous, perhaps, on that account.

'But I shall not let you go alone,' persisted Fantom. 'If you will not let me walk *with* you, I shall walk *behind* you, that's all.'

'No, pray, sir; do not let me take you out of your way: I assure you I have only a very short distance to go now. Do, pray, sir, leave me,' whimpered Nelly.

'Tell me where you are going, then,' said Fantom.

'I am going, sir,' replied Nelly tearfully, 'for Mr Renshaw.'

'I was going to Mr Renshaw's,' said Fantom. 'This is not the way to his lodgings.'

'No, sir,' assented Nelly; 'but I have been there, and they told me he had gone to visit a poor man and woman who live in that court;' and Nelly pointed towards a distant court at the end of the side-street.

'May I ask what you want him for?' inquired Fantom.

Then poor Nelly fairly broke down, and hiding her face in her hands, sobbed out: 'My poor little brother is dying, and he sadly wants to see Mr Renshaw; so I put on my bonnet and shawl, and ran to fetch him, without waiting for anybody to go with me.'

All levity vanished from Fantom's looks and

tone as he said: 'Hush, hush! pray, don't give way in the street.' And so assuring to Nelly was the sudden change, that she allowed him to put her arm in his, and lead her away gently so in the direction of the court.

AFFAIRS OF HONOUR.

No universal social habit, perhaps, has ever expired so suddenly, after having lasted so long, as the custom of fighting duels. It seems almost incomprehensible to the present generation, that within the current century these sanguinary meetings were as common as cricket-matches are now, and that even our leading politicians took part in them. Fox, in 1779, went out with Adam, though the former declined to fire, exclaiming, emphatically, that he had no quarrel. After the ground was measured, his second, Fitzgerald, remarked: 'Fox, you must stand sideways'; to which the stout politician answered: 'Why so? I am as thick one way as the other.' And he was hit accordingly. Pitt fought with Tierney (in consequence of expressions used by the former in the House of Commons) on Putney Heath, at three in the afternoon. Sir Francis Burdett and Mr Paul met at Wimbledon (1807), and satisfied their wounded honour by shooting one another in the leg. Two years afterwards, satisfaction was obtained from Canning by Lord Castlereagh in a similar manner. Not so easily settled was the quarrel between O'Connell and D'Esterre in 1815. The great agitator had described a certain public body in his wonted forcible way as 'the beggarly Corporation of Dublin.' D'Esterre was a member of that body, and demanded the usual penalty. They met at Bishop's Court, Lord Ponsonby's, county Kildare, that nobleman, I suppose, having placed his grounds at their disposal, just as is now done in the case of charitable fêtes. D'Esterre fired and missed; O'Connell shot his antagonist through both his thighs. 'Great were the emotions that burst forth all along the road when it was ascertained that O'Connell was safe.' D'Esterre died on the afternoon of the third day. The event greatly disappointed his party, for he was a crack-shot, and his burly opponent, one would have imagined, could scarcely be missed. The conqueror (as often happened in the case of these manslayers, when it was too late) was deeply touched by the fate of his foe. He repaired to church with his second, and there took a solemn oath that he would never again fight another duel.

'He also offered a pension to the widow of his unfortunate adversary, equal in amount to what her husband had been earning; but the Dublin Corporation (as they well might, considering how they had identified themselves with the quarrel,) rejected this offer, and voted the sum proposed.' After this, the quarrels which were provoked by the agitator's unbridled tongue were taken up by his son Morgan, who found a good deal of work cut out for him in this way. He was challenged among others by our present Prime-minister, Mr Disraeli, the very day after an affair with Lord Alvanley.

The Duke of Wellington's notions about duelling were characteristically conventional. When the 10th were so unpopular in Dublin, he expresses

his wish that they should nevertheless remain there. 'I think it not impossible,' writes he, 'they may have to fight a duel or two; but that I consider of no consequence,' and to do him justice, the Great Duke was always ready to act up to his convictions. In 1829, he desired the Earl of Winchelsea 'to give him that satisfaction for his conduct which a gentleman has a right to require, and which a gentleman never refuses to give'—the cause of quarrel being a political one, and connected with the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. They met in Battersea Fields, but were a good deal incommoded by the common people; fourteen or fifteen gardeners and others being present, who, unaware of the delicate niceties of the duello, adjured them repeatedly to 'have it out' with their fists.

Still nearer to our own times, we find, in 1834, Sir Robert Peel challenging (of all people in the world!) Dr Lushington and Joseph Hume; and Mr Roebuck, M.P., self-styled 'Teareem,' proving the accuracy of that appellation by no less than *two duels*—one, in 1835, with Mr Black, and another, in 1839, with Lord Powderscourt. So late as 1840, the Earl of Cardigan shot Captain Tuckett dead on Wimbledon Common, and being tried by his peers, was pronounced 'Not Guilty,' upon their honour; the Duke of Cleveland only inserting the word *legally* after the 'Not guilty.' These well-known cases, with many others more or less interesting, have been lately collected by Mr Andrew Steinmetz, and published in two volumes, to which the writer of the present paper is much indebted, called *The Romance of Duelling*. But the fact is, nothing can be more matter-of-fact and commonplace than was the duel—with the single exception that it involved the possible sacrifice of life. The laws of combat were as precise as those of entail, and as totally destitute of natural justice. Duellists piqued themselves upon their fairness, whereas, in nine cases out of ten, the contest was grossly unequal. Even the agile-minded Dumas—who himself fought Gaillardet upon the question of the authorship of the infamous drama, *Tour de Nesle*, of the honour of which they were both covetous—is unable to make a defence for the practice. When asked at the trial of Beauvallon, in 1845—a skilled fencer, who ran through Dujarier as safely and easily as a man with a revolver could shoot down one armed with a sling and a stone—Whether he considered it fair that a man well practised with the sword should challenge a man who scarce knows how to hold one? he fenced with *that*. And when again pressed as to whether he considered it a generous and honourable action for a good swordsman to contend with one who does not understand the sword, 'he fenced again, saying: "When we get on the ground, questions of generosity and delicacy—which are very fine questions—disappear before the question of existence, which we risk, and which, *ma foi!* may be put an end to."^{*}

It is quite unnecessary, however, to speak of generosity and delicacy in the matter, and even

of reasonableness; for we suppose no person in possession of his senses would argue that it is reasonable for one who has been insulted to demand an injury in addition to the insult, with the idea of wiping it out. What the president of the court of justice wanted to get out of Dumas, and failed, was, whether the element of fairness was supposed to enter into affairs of honour. Let us substitute, for the sake of argument, a game of billiards for this pistol-shooting. A, who is a first-class billiard-player, insults B, who has never touched a cue; and the consequence of this is, that B is compelled by the laws which govern gentlemen to challenge A at billiards for ten thousand pounds a side—or for life. Even a professed duellist may surely comprehend the absurdity of *that*. We leave out of the question the very important consideration that one man may have a wife and children dependent upon his exertions, and that the other only risks his own worthless life; although that transforms the game at once into a match where one (and perhaps the worse) player is compelled to bet ten thousand pounds to the other's two thousand.

One of those weak but specious arguments, which are never wanting among superficial people, is, that the system of challenges was a curb to insolence, and a check upon bullies. But, unfortunately, it was the knowledge of their proficiency with the pistol that made men bullies, and caused them to behave in society in a manner which would not now be tolerated for an instant. They (figuratively) dragged their coats behind them even in ladies' drawing-rooms—just as the frequenters of Donnybrook Fair used to do—defying Society to tread upon it, and so provoking it to combat. With this praiseworthy intention, Lord Cobham even spat in another noble lord's hat. Captain Ross, the best shot of the past generation, as well as the present, bears most emphatic evidence to the improvement of our social manners since the abolition of duelling. His skill with the pistol was much respected by gentlemen fire-eaters, who consequently invited him to these meetings, but only as a *second*. Indeed (although there have been undoubtedly some exceptions), it would appear that, beside the cowardice involved in the fact of a practised pistol-shooter taking advantage of his superior skill with that weapon, professed duellists were conspicuous for the absence of personal courage. They did not mind covering their man at thirty paces, and taking their chance of being 'potted' by a chance shot, but they shrank from fighting across a handkerchief, or over a table. Whenever there was an equal chance of destruction, they called it murder. Mr Steinmetz supplies us with several examples. The duel between Captain Stewart and D'Egville, the Creole crack-shot, is perhaps the most striking. They were dining in the same company at Kingston, in Jamaica, and the captain was called upon for a Gaelic song, but said he did not know one. D'Egville, with insolent persistence, nevertheless repeated the request. At last, pretending to yield, Stewart, who was a first-rate Greek scholar, intoned an ode of Anacreon, which he called *The Lady of Scotland's Mountains*, and this was warmly applauded as a Gaelic song by D'Egville among the rest. When the deception was discovered, however, nothing would serve the Creole but that revenge which he had obtained so often on such easy terms, and he accordingly challenged Stewart.

* It is probable that the great Alexandre Dumas Davy, Marquis de la Pailleterie, never made so great a fool of himself as on this occasion, for besides his feeble evasions of the main question, when asked in the usual way what profession he belonged to, he must needs reply in his high-flying manner: 'I should call myself a dramatic author, were I not in the country of Corneille.' 'O sir,' returned the president grimly, 'there are degrees. Go on with your deposition.'

The Scotchman had already once killed a friend in a duel, and had made a resolve never to fight again; so he declined D'Egville's offer, and the latter accordingly struck him with horsewhip in some public place. Upon this, Stewart determined to rid the world of so pestilent a scoundrel. 'He sent him a message, requesting a meeting behind the Iguana rocks. Then, accompanied by two of his crew, he proceeded to the rendezvous, and directed the men to dig a grave sufficiently deep to receive two bodies. D'Egville soon appeared; and Stewart at once proposed, as conditions of the duel, that they both should stand in the grave, holding their pistols in one hand, and the end of a pocket-handkerchief in the other. The Scotchman was firm and calm in implacable resolve. The Creole, despite his efforts to appear undismayed, betrayed evident signs of perturbation. The seconds drew lots for the word of command—the fatal signal of death. The antagonists descended into the grave. The handkerchief was placed in their hands, firmly grasped by Stewart, tremblingly held by the other. The word "Fire" was about to be given, when the ruffian fainted and fell at the feet of his adversary, the pistol and handkerchief dropping from his hands, as though he had been shot dead. Stewart spurned him with his foot, exclaiming: "Cowardly cut-throat, you are too contemptible an object to excite my anger!"' No doubt, the position was trying to Mr D'Egville, but it was not for a professional to shew less determination than an amateur.

In the days of Peter the Great, duelling in Russia went very much out of fashion, by reason of that monarch's passing an edict that any man who challenged another should be hanged, whether the meeting took place or not. General Zass and Prince Dolgorouki, nevertheless, discovered a means of repairing their wounded honour. 'We may not fight, prince,' said the general; 'but let us both stand in yonder embrasure against which the enemy are directing their fire, and remain there till one of us is struck.' This sagacious proposal being accepted, both accordingly repaired to the spot indicated, and, in the presence of their own army, as well as that of Sweden, 'stood erect with one hand on the hip, and looking fiercely at each other, until the prince was cut in two by a cannon-ball.' If this proceeding was not very sensible, it was at least a fair one; and the same may be said of that professional proposal of the physician who suggested that himself and his rival should select at random from a couple of pills, the one poisonous, and the other innocuous. A duel between a barber and a grocer, with razors, resulted, on the contrary (as might have been expected), in the victory of the former, who had of course precisely the same advantage as is enjoyed with pistols by the better shot.

Even crack-shots, however, were liable to miss at times. 'In 1841, a gentleman, to keep his hand in, was firing in the gallery of Dusenne, and making sad havoc with the puppets set up as targets in that establishment. Every shot told, and was hailed with cries of admiration; immediately after which a calm voice was heard every time observing: "He couldn't do as much on the ground." At length, the smasher of puppets turned round with fury upon this detractor with a "Will you try me?" "Very happy to do so," returned the imperturbable spectator. They went to the ground immediately; and the crack-shot fired first, and

missed. "I told you so," remarked the other quietly, and walked off humming an operatic air.'

It was not often that such generosity is recorded on the part of duellists, but it occurred occasionally. Perpignan, an incorrigible jester, fought with M. Charles Meurice. It was a very serious affair, the distance being only five paces—almost *au mouchoir*. Perpignan had the first fire, and managed to miss his adversary. 'Now, Perpignan,' said the other, who wished to try the nerve of an opponent with a pistol held to his breast, 'just tell me what you are thinking about at this moment.'

'My dear fellow,' replied the jester with the greatest coolness, 'I was thinking that were I in your place, I wouldn't fire!' Whereupon, his antagonist burst out laughing, and magnanimously threw down his weapon.

This same M. Meurice had the good-fortune to be again missed in a duel, and this time by a veteran marksman; and although himself an excellent shot, he also failed to hit his man. The second of the latter noticed that the veteran muttered something in that awful moment; and when the danger was passed, he took him aside, and said: 'Now, you must admit that you thought your last hour was come, and uttered a prayer.'

'That is true,' said he. 'I was making a vow to the Virgin never again to *aim at the head*.'

It cannot be denied that positive public benefits have sometimes (though undesignedly) flowed from duels. In a duel at Boulogne between two inexperienced persons, a sudden cry was heard after the double discharge. The combatants were unhurt, but one of them had shot a lawyer who was passing by on the road. In the famous duel between Pierrot and Arlequin, they fired together, and each killed his adversary's second. This is a most excellent plan, for in nine cases out of ten it is the seconds who cause duels, or rather who omit to take any steps to prevent them. 'If seconds were half as unwilling to let their principals shoot one another as their principals are to do so,' wrote one who had stood at twenty paces before a pistol-muzzle more than once, 'we should not have many duels; and if they were half as unwilling to see their principals fight as to fight themselves, we should have still less.'

In old times, however, this sarcasm could scarcely have been merited, for it was then quite usual for seconds to espouse the cause of their chiefs; in fact, the duel was expanded into a combat of four. The following is a charming illustration of this custom. A gentleman who had been called out, applied to a friend to be his second. 'My dear fellow,' answered the latter, 'I won fifteen hundred guineas last night, and shall cut a poor figure at fighting to-day; but if you apply to the person I won them off, and who has not a farthing left, I have no doubt he will fight like a wild-cat.'

Sometimes, on the other hand, so far from being expected to join in the fray, seconds were dispensed with altogether; as when the two French noblemen were tied together in what might well be called a hackney-coach, and then, holding each other by the left hand, were permitted to do what they could with their daggers, while it made two revolutions round the square; when the two gentlemen shut themselves up in a puncheon, and fought with knives, it is also probable that no seconds deemed it incumbent on them to join the party. But these were exceptional conflicts, which neither antagonist expected to survive. Generally

speaking, it was highly dangerous to fight without seconds, on account of the suspicion of foul-play that might attach to the survivor. Thus, Major Campbell of the 21st was hung for shooting Captain Boyd of the same regiment in a room adjoining the mess-room. Both their pistols had been discharged; but Boyd, although before death he allowed that everything had been fair, was heard to say: 'Campbell, you hurried me: you know I wanted you to wait and have friends.' Those words were Campbell's death-doom.

In France, duels are still tolerably common. The press is always being called to account for its luscubations—generally by the military. Everybody remembers M. de Pene's affair in 1858, who was challenged by a whole regiment. De Girardin, Edmond About, and De Lamartine have all 'given their proofs' of courageous folly in this way.

In America, though 'the Code' is not so strictly observed—Yankee combats being more like the 'rough-and-tumble' conflicts of Lancashire than the prim affairs of the Bois de Boulogne—duels have almost always a fatal result. Perhaps the system is considered to be aristocratic and gentlemanly; but, at all events, it is in great favour with our republican cousins. In vain, some States, in order to check the practice, have enacted that the survivor shall in all cases *pay his victim's debts*. Those who are bent on fighting fight in the next State. One of the most determined contests on record took place near Philadelphia, in 1830, between Dr Smith and Dr Jeffries.

The distance fixed upon was only eight paces, at which they exchanged shots without either of them receiving any injury. Some efforts were then made by their friends to bring about an accommodation, but unavailingly, as Dr Jeffries declared he would not leave the ground until he had lost his own life, or taken that of his antagonist. Pistols were then handed to them a second time, and at this fire the right arm of Dr Smith was broken, which delayed the proceedings for a few moments until he recovered from the exhaustion, when he declared that, as he was wounded, he was ready to die, and requested the seconds to proceed. The pistols were then put into their hands a third time, Dr Smith using his left hand. At this fire, Dr Jeffries was wounded in the thigh, and his loss of blood occasioned an exhaustion, which again delayed the conflict for a few minutes. He, however, recovered, and both desired to shorten the distance. They now stood up for the fourth time, covered with blood, and at a distance of six feet. They were to fire between the words "one" and "five;" and the shots proved fatal to both parties. They fell. Dr Smith dropped dead, the ball having penetrated his heart; Dr Jeffries was shot through the breast, and survived but four hours.

The more favourite method of proceeding in the United States is, however, to fight with rifles, beginning at eighty yards. They sometimes fight in a wood, and approach one another like wild Indians. Imagine the feelings of a Parisian *Gandin* (the cream of society), or of our own Cardigan class, invited to partake of satisfaction in a wood—sticking their hat on the muzzle of their rifle, to induce the other gentleman to waste his fire on *that!* Such conduct as this, they might well urge, is calculated to strike at the root of the most aristocratic institution. The fact is, it was the growing vulgarity of the matter, and by no means any sense of its futility or wickedness, which put a stop to

English duelling. In 1838, a linen-draper in Tottenham Court Road, and an innkeeper's son, were so audacious as to imagine that they had that 'honour' to avenge which is the exclusive prerogative of persons of position. They had quarrelled, like their betters, in Piccadilly at night, and they met at Wimbledon the next morning, when the poor linen-draper was killed. His fate caused great consternation among the fashionable world, who seemed to perceive at once that their most serious occupation was gone. In France, the love of fighting has overcome the sense of ridicule, and nobody smiled even when 'a bath-keeper called out a crockery-ware seller for palming off on him a cracked pot;' but in England, where, if we have less wit, we have more humour, the days of the duello were numbered. Nevertheless, in the same year of the linen-draper's catastrophe, Lord Castle-reagh was called out by the husband of Grisi, and seriously wounded; and the Cardigan-Tuckett affair took place two years after that. The last duels fought by Englishmen in this country had both fatal consequences. Lieutenant Monroe shot his brother-in-law, Colonel Fawcett, in 1843; after which affair the Anti-duelling Association was formed, and the practice was denounced by the War-Office. In 1845, Lieutenant Hawkey shot Mr Seton at Portsmouth.

The last duel fought on English soil was so late as 1852, between two Frenchmen, at Egham, in which one was killed. In 1862, Mr Dillon, an Englishman, was shot in the Bois de Boulogne by the Duc de Grammont Cadérouse; and so ends the catalogue of homicidal folly, so far as our own countrymen are concerned. As we have already stated, no social custom was ever so rapidly extinguished. It is not a century ago that their 'cloth' did not even protect 'the clergy.' The Rev. Mr Bate, editor of the *Morning Post*, earned his title of member of the church-militant by fighting two duels in one year with sword and pistol. Mr Hill, too, chaplain to Bland's Dragoons, was shot by Colonel Gardiner of the Carabiniers at Epping. At this time, there were Handbooks of Duelling published—just as we now have Treatises on Croquet—containing the best advice.

'About six in the morning,' says one, 'is the best time for meeting in the summer, seven in the spring and autumn, and eight in the winter.' If the gentleman about to fight is a smoker, 'let him take a cigar; but if a married man, avoid disturbing his wife and children.' The period most 'trying' to a duellist, we read, 'is from the time the word "Ready" is given until the handkerchief drops. . . . He must not, however, allow it to operate on his mind. . . . If, upon the discharge, his adversary's ball has taken effect, he must not be alarmed or confused, but quietly submit the part to the examination of his surgeon. . . . I cannot impress upon an individual too strongly the propriety of remaining perfectly calm and collected when hit: he must not allow himself to be alarmed or confused; but summoning up all his resolution, treat the matter coolly; and if he dies, go off with as good a grace as possible.' From this point of view, nothing could be more commendable than the last moments of that first-rate shot Stackpole, who only remarked, while falling: 'By George, I've missed him.'

Doubtless, that moment wherein you felt the adversary's weapon was covering you, must have been "trying," although we have Lord Byron's

authority for stating that the unpleasantness wore off in time.

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person—twelve yards off, or so—
A gentlemanly distance, not too near.
If you have got a former friend for foe ;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more *Irish*, and less nice.

The chances of escape from being killed were, it is true, reckoned by some at fourteen to one, and six to one even against being hit; but there were less favourable estimates. How extensive the mischief really was, may be gathered from the fact, that Guthrie (so late as 1833) in his clinical lectures at Westminster Hospital, thought it worth while to remonstrate professionally against the description of weapon used in such encounters. ‘There is neither charity nor humanity,’ says he, ‘in choosing the pistols at present adopted. The balls are so small, that the holes they make are always a source of inconvenience in the cure, and the quantity of powder is also so limited that it will not send a ball through a moderately thick gentleman. It therefore sticks in some place where it should not. These things should be altered with the present diffusion of knowledge.’

But better advice than even Guthrie’s was given upon this matter by Mr V—, a mathematical tutor at Cambridge. Hearing that a graduate of his college and his pupil was about to fight a duel, he sent for him, and thus admonished the youth. ‘Why do you fight?’ inquired the mathematician. ‘Because he gave me the lie,’ returned the young man. ‘Very well; let him prove it. If he proves it, you did lie; and if he does not prove it, he lies. Why should you shoot one another? Let him prove it. Q.E.D.’

THE INFLUENCE OF ART ON LANDSCAPE.

A SUBJECT of great interest, both in a scientific and in a popular point of view, presents itself to our consideration in the changes which have been wrought by man on the whole scenery and aspect of every civilised country. How different from its present appearance must that of our island have been when the Romans first set foot on it, although even then it was far from being in its primitive wildness! How great the change effected by human agency even since dates comparatively very recent! The towns and villages, the churches and their spires, the mansions and cottages, the cultivated fields and enclosing fences, affect the character of almost every scene to such a degree, that it is almost impossible for us to picture it in imagination such as we know it must have been when mere savages roamed through the forests. Limiting our attention to one part of this subject—not, however, an unimportant one—let us try if we can conceive how different the landscape would be from what we now behold if plants and trees had not been introduced from abroad. Few except botanists have any idea how much we are indebted for the charms of our scenery to the introduction of trees not indigenous to our island. Most people know that the prized ornaments of the flower-

garden are chiefly of foreign origin; but they look on a wide landscape without thinking that it likewise owes much of its loveliness to the introduction of foreign trees at different dates, through the lapse of many centuries. Plants and animals of very different kinds belong to particular parts of the world, and are peculiarly characteristic of them; although in many instances they are found to succeed equally well in other regions. It is left to man to adapt nature to himself, and to seek his own profit or pleasure by transferring its productions from one region to another, which he has already done very extensively, carrying with him the most useful plants wherever he settles as a colonist, and bringing plants from distant countries to enrich or beautify that of his abode. It is needless to enumerate many examples; it may be enough to remind the reader that wheat, barley, rye, oats, rice, and the coffee-plant are gifts of the Old World to the New; maize and the potato the most valuable gifts of the New World to the Old.

Only a few of the plants most extensively cultivated as field-crops in Britain are natives of this country; indeed, there is none which we can confidently regard as a native except the turnip. We know not well whence any of the kinds of grain which we cultivate was originally derived, except, through recent discovery, in the case of wheat, which seems to be a modified form of a grass found on the coasts of the Mediterranean. But we have sufficient reason to be confident that none of them is indigenous to Britain, and that all have been introduced by man. The introduction of the potato is recent, and that of mangold-wurzel much more recent still. To say nothing of the economic importance of any of these—the reason of their extensive cultivation—let us think for a moment how greatly they affect the aspect of the landscape wherever cultivation prevails.

As it is with our field-crops, so with our trees, both fruit and forest trees. Of those which—accumulated in large masses, or scattered in lawns, or ranged in hedgerows—give so much of their character to all the fairest scenes in our land, many of the most important kinds, and now the most abundant, have certainly been introduced by man. The oak and ash are truly British, some kinds of willow, the birch, and one or two species of poplar, as the abele or white poplar, and the trembling aspen of the Scottish Highlands. Sir Walter Scott made no mistake when he introduced into the description of Highland scenery, in the *Lady of the Lake*,

The poplars gray,
That waved and wept on Loch Achray.

The beech is certainly a native of England, and great beech-forests appear anciently to have covered many parts of the country, at least as far north as Yorkshire, where Gurth the swine-herd is represented as conducting his charge to feed upon the mast; but there is much doubt if this tree is truly a native of Scotland, many districts of which it now greatly beautifies. Of elms, it is probable that only one kind, the wych-elm, is originally British; even that known as the English elm, so noble an ornament of our landscapes, having probably been introduced from the continent of Europe, although at a very early date. The lime-tree, so beautiful

in form and foliage, and so delightful in its odour at its flowering season in the end of summer, when bees in myriads hum around it, seems likewise to have been originally brought to this country from the continent, and probably about the same time with the elm, by the Romans, when Roman conquest began to be succeeded by Roman civilisation. The sycamore, popularly—although incorrectly—known as the plane-tree, and the Spanish chestnut, were perhaps introduced about the same time with these. The former is a common native of many parts of Europe, and is so well suited to the climate of Britain, that it has long been frequent even in northern parts; the chestnut, however, demands for the production of its fruit a climate at least as mild as that of the south of England, although, when planted as an ornamental tree, it grows well even in the north of Scotland. It is not even a native of the continent of Europe, although now abundantly naturalised, and forming extensive woods in many parts of the south of Europe, but was originally introduced from Asia Minor. The horse-chestnut, that magnificent ornament of parks, is of recent introduction, having been brought to Western Europe from Constantinople in the end of the sixteenth century. It is a curious fact, that the native country of this fine tree is not yet well ascertained, although it is supposed to be Persia, or some neighbouring part of the East.

As to the whole tribe of pines and firs, we have only one indigenous kind, the Scotch pine—more generally called the Scotch fir, although it is a true pine, and not properly a fir—of which forests never planted by the hand of man still exist on the Grampians, and which probably in former times clothed many mountain-slopes now covered only with heath. The silver fir, all the kinds of spruce, and the larch, have been introduced from the continent of Europe and from America. Not one of them was known in this country in the days of Queen Elizabeth, unless perhaps one or two may have been planted as curiosities. The larch began to be planted as a forest-tree only in the middle of last century. What essential features the spruce and larch now are of the scenery of this country, no one needs to be told. Seated on a hill, on a summer day, enjoying the refreshing breeze, we have sometimes tried to fancy what the scene before us must have been, as it appeared to our ancestors a few generations back, when no stately silver firs arose above the other trees of the woods, and there were no dark masses of spruce, no plantations of light-green and feathery larches. If our native trees alone had not been planted instead of these, how much more monotonous would the aspect of nature have been! Noble and beautiful as are the oak and ash, and much as we have enjoyed the view of a long avenue in a great beech-forest, there is a pleasure in contemplating a greater variety of forms, all beautiful. It is even pleasant, in passing from place to place, to find the aspect of nature changing through the prevalence of different kinds of trees, instead of presenting a perfect uniformity. Variety exists to no small extent even where man has not interfered: here, we have abundant hawthorn; there, a hazel copse; here—exquisite in beauty—a grove of birch on a Scottish hillside; there, groups of alders or willows beside a stream; but if in the selection of trees to be planted chiefly for their usefulness we had been limited to our native

species, an increased monotony of scene would have been the necessary result. This has been prevented by the introduction of foreign species, admirably suited to our soil and climate, which, whilst they are economically of great value, add also to the diversity and beauty of the landscape.

Ornamental shrubs ought perhaps to be noticed as well as trees. Although not so much affecting the general landscape, they greatly modify the scene in the immediate vicinity of our abodes. Few of those which we much prize are natives of Britain. The hawthorn is one, however, of which the value will always be appreciated; the holly is another. But bays, laurels, lilac, laburnum, rhododendrons, and almost all the other shrubs which we plant merely for their beauty, are of foreign origin, some of them brought from the East, and some from the West. The case is very similar as to our fruit-trees, of which, however, the apple is probably to be reckoned indigenous, appearing in our woods in its original condition as the crab, although the varieties improved by cultivation were certainly first introduced by the Romans. The pear does not seem to be a true native of Britain; nor the plum, unless, as many botanists suppose, the plum be really a mere cultivated variety of the bullace or the sloe. The cherry is regarded by some as a native, but common as it now is in its wild form as the *gean*, there is reason to doubt if it is really a native of Britain, or even of Europe. The very name cherry is derived from Kerasunt, on the coast of the Black Sea, whence this fruit was introduced into Italy, in the year 74 B.C., by Lucullus, after his victory over Mithridates; and it is not improbable that all the wild cherries, now so abundant in continental Europe and in Britain, have sprung from the cultivated trees of this oriental origin.

We have taken no notice of any but a few of the most common trees, whether native or introduced, not wishing to weary the reader with a long enumeration of kinds which never have been and probably never will be extensively prevalent in any part of the country. Enough has been said, however, to shew that the charms of our scenery, as we now delight to behold it, are in a large measure due to the introduction of trees from foreign countries. Those to whom the subject is new, must be surprised to find how much this is the case. But what has been done by the introduction of trees, encourages the expectation that much may yet be done with similar advantage, by the introduction of new kinds; and some of the firs recently introduced from the north-west of America—the most magnificent and beautiful of their kind—promise well for the future. The araucaria is rather too tender for the climate of this country, except in the south of England and of Ireland, where probably it may assume a place of no little prominence, contrasting admirably with all the forms of vegetation around it. It seems not improbable that the gigantic Wellingtonia may become a common tree in Britain, and that some of the Himalayan junipers—trees of great beauty—may add to the diversity of the landscape.

There are districts, however, in which man has as yet wrought little change, as the wide Highland moors, and other uplands. It is interesting to look on these as presenting much the same aspect which they did to our forefathers many centuries ago. Even in the neighbourhood of our great cities, there are portions of the scene which remain

unchanged, whilst all is changed around. If we stand on the top of St Paul's, we see the Surrey Hills, probably very much as they were in the days of the Romans. The Pentland Hills, also, except on their lower slopes, present to Edinburgh the same aspect which they did when a castle was first erected on its rock. It would not be pleasant to think of their being transformed like the more level country. They appear, like the ancient castles and abbeys, which we carefully preserve, as monuments of the past—monuments more noble and interesting, however, and surrounded with a greater variety of associations, than any which the hand of man ever reared. Whatever changes may take place in the lower grounds, which man inhabits, and on which he operates, our hills and mountains will still preserve their character, reminding us in their grandeur that all we can do is but little, and connecting the ages past with the far-distant future, leading us to thoughts more solemn and affecting than those which readily arise from the view of fertile fields, and scenes full of the busy activity of the present hour.

Trees are also among the most interesting monuments of the past. We have oaks in Britain more ancient than our oldest castles or cathedrals, and yews which have probably lived for a far greater number of centuries. What associations surround them! what various scenes must have occurred beneath their shade! They are links which bind us to remote ages. Scarcely less interesting are the ideas suggested by the trees which have been introduced at different times throughout a long succession of centuries. There are probably no elms in Britain as old as the days of the Romans; but as we gaze on the stately beauty of our elms, we think of the importation of the first young trees from Gaul, and of their distribution over the country—how some Roman clothed in toga planted a few beside his residence in Kent; and how others were conveyed along the *Stratum Vitellianum*—that great road which still exists, and bears the name of Watling Street—to Uriconium; how some, perhaps, were soon conveyed as far north as Eboracum, which we now call York. How carefully they must have been watered and watched after the long journey! Other trees seem to speak to us of the growth of civilisation again, after Roman civilisation had given place to barbarism. Some of them tell us of a regard to amenity and a desire for rural improvement subsisting even amidst the distractions of civil war. Others of more recent introduction attest the rapid progress of the arts of peace in more tranquil times. The progress of discovery is also indicated. Here we have a North American spruce or a Weymouth pine, brought over from America soon after our first colonies were established. And here again we have other firs, none of which have yet attained a large size, and which suggest the thought of recent explorations in the most distant parts of the world, explorations undertaken in the cause of science alone.

Even amidst the scenes which man has done most to change, there are spots, covered with truly indigenous trees, which probably retain an aspect much the same as they presented a thousand years ago. We turn our eyes in another direction, and larches suggest the thought of Switzerland, or spruce firs lead us in imagination to the northern forests of Europe or America, lime-trees to Central Europe, the horse-chestnut and the lilac to Persia; but the combination of them

all in one scene must affect our minds more deeply, as indicative of long progress, advanced civilisation, and all that makes us great among the nations of the earth.

FOUND DEAD.

CHAPTER VIII.—IN THE STUDIO.

'THAT guest of ours had a writ in his pocket,' said Mr Blissett drily, turning from the window, as the brougham drove away. 'I wish you had got him to lend you a thousand pounds, curse him!'

'He was much too clever a person to have done that, I think, sir.'

'Not at all, my young friend; it is just those vulgar, cunning scoundrels, who fancy they know so much, that get taken in. They plume themselves—at least this Ashden and men of his kidney do—upon bold strokes. He fancied he saw in you a lad of fortune and family, just loose upon the town; your notions of honour unsullied, a thing they calculate upon more than you would imagine, considering that among themselves the thing doesn't exist. He would have taken your name upon his paper as a pike snaps at a perch. I tell you, if this letter had not been genuine, if we two had concocted it, we might have sent him clean away minus all that money. Gad, think of that! Don't look shocked, my lad. I only say Supposing. One may suppose anything.—Have you a drop of coffee left? Good. Get the brandy out of yonder cupboard. Those two things go better together than even Ashden's bays—my bays, that is, which Ashden drives; but he will not get another pair out of me. Come; my hand is steady enough now: let us do a little more sketching. You think me hard-hearted, Steen, because I can go on with my work after receiving yonder letter! But it is because I feel it, and wish to forget it, sir, that I work. Time enough to be sad when I have to answer it—any time before five o'clock.'

'Then you are not going down to Allgrove, sir, as the young lady begs?'

'Good heavens! do I look in a fit state to go? Did I seem so yesterday, Mr Steen? You must be a very unobservant person,' exclaimed the painter vehemently; 'and yet you have quick feelings, too, forsooth—fine susceptibilities. You would have taken that honest gentleman by the throat just now, because he hinted you were son of mine. I let him go away with that belief, for many reasons, but chiefly for your own sake: our supposed relationship will at least secure you more respect than your real position. If he had known you came from the Refuge for the Destitute, do you suppose that Mr Ashden would have sat at the same table, or that if Mrs Maude knew, she would have cooked that omelette for you? If you suppose that, indeed, you should not blame me for supposing. Look here, Charles Steen. We must understand one another, or, at all events, you must understand me. Yesterday, you were a beggar; to-day, you are a gentleman. I have set you on horseback, don't—'

'I know the proverb, Mr Blissett,' interrupted the young man earnestly; 'but I had rather not

hear it from your lips. You have been so very, very good to me ; I wish to be *all* gratitude, *all* respect ; I wish to have no place in my heart unpenetrated by your kindness ; I wish—

“ Tut, man ; *three* wishes ! ” interrupted the painter coldly. “ You remind me of the fool in the fairy tale : ‘ I wish we had black puddings for supper. I wish one stuck to your nose, goodman. I wish it off again.’ What you mean to say is : Continue to be my benefactor, but do not take out your benefits in disagreeable speeches. A very natural sentiment, but one which you are scarcely in a position to entertain : it is too much of a luxury. Seriously, who wants to insult you ? Pooh, pooh ! You must learn to put up with my little ways.”

If Charles Steen’s handsome face had not been so cast down, he could not have failed to mark his patron’s eyes ; they regarded him so like a cat that plays with a mouse, half amused, half cruel.

“ If I was the brute you take me for,” continued he, “ I might say a quarrel is impossible between us ; a quarrel, that is, upon your side. You cannot leave my roof, because you have no clothes to go in. Whatever you possess is mine. But I make use of no such arguments. Be obedient, be docile ; that is all I ask. I like your spirit, young man. You have got good blood in you from one side, at least, I’ll warrant.—There, there ; I meant nothing to your mother’s discredit. Come along ; and while I sketch your face, you shall tell me your ancestry, unfold your family-tree. Begin from the Conqueror, if you please ; but perhaps I offend again, for he was a natural son.—That is just how I wish you to look—a trifle insolent, you know, like the young fellow who is bearding Lucius Sylla. That’s capital. You don’t mind standing up for a little, do you ? Good. Just a half-turn to the right, please. Now, for your history ; or do you prefer being questioned by counsel ? Have you a father, have you a mother ? as sentimental Tom sings in his *Bridge of Sighs*. ”

“ I am an orphan, sir.”

“ I am glad to hear it. It may seem selfish, but I don’t like a divided allegiance ; I wish to be father, and mother, and all to you. Who was your papa ? ”

“ He was an officer in the Indian army, sir.”

“ Goodness gracious ! Then Ashden may be right after all. Time and place concur to make it probable, and, I may add, complexion, though it must be confessed that for good looks the second generation has the advantage.”

“ My father died in battle, sir,” continued the young man gravely ; “ and a brother-officer, who fought by his side in his last field, became my protector at a time when I needed a friend even more than last night. My mother had died in giving me birth, and I was left a child in the care of hired servants, and there was no money wherever to pay them. Captain Mangoe — ”

“ I knew that man,” interposed Mr Blissett ; “ I’ve got a sketch of him somewhere ; and he has an I O U of mine ; that is, if it has been carried to his account in the next world ; for he is dead, I fancy, is he not ? ”

“ He died six months ago, sir. For five years in India, and for six in England, he was a father to me, though for the last period only by proxy. I was brought up along with his own children at Cayenne Lodge, in Staffordshire, where Mrs Mangoe and her family resided.”

“ Ah, I remember that woman. She was a Tartar, was she not, my young friend ? Not a sort of person to appreciate a husband’s friend’s orphan boy in her house, I should think. Quite a forbidden degree of relationship, eh ? I thought so.”

“ She was a hard woman, sir, to me. I always endeavoured to respect her, for Captain Mangoe’s sake, but my presence under her roof was hateful to her, and she had no hesitation in letting me see it. Many a kind message from him to me, I well know, she omitted to deliver ; but the little presents he sent from time to time shewed that he had not forgotten me. She did not dare keep them back, lest he should find it out on his return. But as you know, sir, he never did return ; and when the news of his death arrived, I was made to feel the difference.”

“ So I should think,” broke in the painter laughing. “ How well I remember those Mangoes ! We used to call them Curry and Rice. *She* was Curry, of course. It was wonderful that he ever allowed her to leave India alive, there are so many opportunities in that country of getting rid of shrews. She had two horrid boys, had she not—Deived Curries ? Ah ! you must have had a nice time of it as they grew up. Mrs M. starved you, and the young ones beat you, eh ? ”

“ They could not beat me, sir,” answered the young fellow proudly ; “ but they had a tutor, a supple fawning knave, who, when Captain Mangoe died— ”

“ I see,” chuckled Mr Blissett, while the other blushed and hesitated—“ made up to the widow by pitching into the orphan. Very natural, if not very right. He’ll marry her within the year, my good sir, and then you will be amply avenged. So, as soon as Mangoe went aloft, this tutor began to larrup you. It’s quite a little drama ; with that East India pickle in it, too, that used to be so popular with our playgoers of a quarter of a century ago. Pray, go on ; you amuse me. Well, you had all these enemies ; had you not any friends ? ”

“ I had one, sir. There was a Mr Madden, who lived close by, and had known my poor father— ”

“ What ! Starke Madden ? —the Honourable Starke, of the Bombay Irregulars ? ”

“ The same, sir.”

“ Oh, this is charming ; why, we have all our friends in common, Steen ! Madden was the cleverest fellow in India. Did not possess a shilling, and never spent less than three thousand a year. Lived on loot, some people said. And had a large family too. Every luxury, confound the fellow ! ”

“ He had five boys, sir ; and, as you say, he was said to have spent a good deal of money. I am sure I have no right to reproach him, for he gave me many a half-sovereign. He was the only person who was kind to me after Captain Mangoe’s death, and I told him how I was treated. “ Well, look here, Charley,” said he. “ I am a bad adviser, for I can’t even advise myself ; at least, that’s what people say, and damme if I don’t believe they’re right. But it seems to me you’re getting very hard lines ; and if I was in your place, I’m frizzled” (you remember his language, sir) “ if I wouldn’t run away.” ”

“ His language ! ” chuckled Mr Blissett—“ Starke Madden’s language ! Yes, I remember it. How did Mother Mangoe, who was so ‘ serious,’ contrive to accept his protestations, his ejaculations ? But there, if ever a woman dearly loved a lord—I

don't mean *her* lord—it was old Curry; and I dare-say Starke's, being an Honourable, stoned for a good deal. But what on earth did he visit Cayenne Lodge for? Not for *her*, I'll take my oath. Was it for his grub?

'He dined there pretty often, sir,' said the young man smiling; 'and, indeed, as I found out afterwards, the larder at Madden House was not very well furnished.'

'Yes, Mother Mangoe understood the art of eating,' observed the painter reflectively; 'and it was also whispered, that of drinking. But I don't wish you to betray the weaknesses of your dear benefactress.—Well, "I'm frizzled if I wouldn't run away," said Madden. What did *you* say?'

'I said: "Where shall I run to, Mr Madden?" "Run to me, run to Madden House," answered he laughing. "I can offer you but little, and that little not for long; for, between ourselves, I shall myself have to bolt one of these fine days. But there is a spare bed, and a knife and fork for you, while I'm there." I said something about my unwillingness to be a charge upon him, but he answered that the advantage would be upon his side, since I could teach his boys. "You're a doosid clever fellow, Charley, *you* are; you know Greek and Latin, and a number of other useful arts, although, may I be boiled if I ever saw the good of them; and you shall teach my boys. Our tutor left the place last week because he couldn't live any longer upon rabbits (by the by, I hope you like rabbits), and you shall take his place whenever you like. Don't you stand any more nonsense from this scoundrel here, who is wanting to step into poor Mangoe's shoes. My advice is (if you *will* have it), the very next time he offers to lay a finger on you, you knock him head over tip—straight out from the shoulder—this way. Ready money is uncommon short with me, but if you break the bridge of his nose, Charley, I will give you a sovereign."

'And did both events come off?' asked Mr Blissett coolly, as he stepped back to look at the effect of his sketch.

'No, sir. I did knock the tutor "head over tip," though, and did break the bridge of his nose. He had no right to strike me, sir, for I had done no wrong; and besides, I was almost a man. Then I walked straight out of the house, with nothing to call my own but the clothes I stood in—they were the rags I burned in your fire last night.'

'Capital!' said Mr Blissett drily. 'Some men pride themselves upon being the architects of their own fortune—generally offensive people, by the by—but you, at an early age, have distinguished yourself as a demolisher. You interest me more and more. Life at Madden House must have been a great joke.'

'Mr Madden was very kind to me, sir,' returned the young man gravely; 'kinder than—he was about to say, "than anybody ever was"; but he noticed the pencil suddenly cease to move, and the attitude of his host become in an instant fixed and rigid, so—"kinder than words can say," added Charles Steen. A less observant eye than his own would have perceived that this singular man, who took no pains to ingratiate himself beyond the mere benefits he conferred, was of a jealous nature, and would have resented any expressed preference of a former patron. And yet the lad's heart smote him the next moment for having obeyed the instinct, and he hastened to repair his error. 'I could not tell you of my life under that roof, sir, merely to

amuse you. Whatever may have been Mr Madden's social shortcomings, to me he was most generous—'

'But he had nothing, my good sir,' interposed Mr Blissett with a sneer. 'We can all be generous with what is not our own. He did not even pay you, it seems, the sovereign he promised you.'

'He said he hadn't got one, sir, and I believe him. But he gave me a pony worth ten times the money; only it was seized, of course, with all the other things, when the bailiffs came. He had plenty of horses, at the time I speak of, in his stable—each of the boys, indeed, had one for himself. His house, too, was a very large and handsome one, though sparingly furnished; and there was a good deal of ground about it, and capital rabbit-shooting. I soon understood why the late tutor had given up the situation.

Of rabbits hot, and rabbits cold,
Of rabbits young, and rabbits old,
Of rabbits tender, and rabbits tough,
Thank you, my lord, I've had enough,

were the lines he quoted (to the Honourable Starke Madden's immense delight), when he threw up his appointment. "The only rabbit you won't taste here, Charley," said my laughing host, "is Welsh-rabbit, for, may I be toasted myself, if anybody will credit us with a cheese." The whole family lived like a primeval household, upon the products of the chase, or rather the rabbit-warren. But for the food furnished by that fecund animal, and for eggs, we should all have been vegetarians. Butcher's-meat was never seen; but, though there was no gardener, we grew our own salads and potatoes. There had been a great store of flour in the house, laid in by its provident head before the supplies were cut off, and we baked our own bread; but even this resource began to fail. Mr Madden had done his best for the garrison, by victualling it in the first instance from a distance, leaving the immediate neighbourhood rich and unharried, but, after a while, everything grew as bare about us as though we had been locusts. He had applied to his brother, the Earl of March Hare (and head of the family), for money so often, that he had been forbidden the house; but on one occasion, which I shall never forget, he sent the five boys and me, all mounted, over to Hare Castle; and the old lord gave us lunch, and a five-pound note apiece to each of his nephews, accompanied, however, with such unpleasant remarks, that I declined to go again. Finally, the earl got his brother an appointment abroad—the governorship of some small island—and one fine morning the Honourable Starke Madden was missing: he had, as he had predicted to me would be the case, been obliged "to bolt," like our friends the rabbits from their burrows, so close were the ferrets behind him, and that very day the bailiffs took possession. But Mr Madden, I am glad to say, got safe away out of the country; and all his boys have since joined his Excellency in his distant home. When the exequation was put in, there was nothing for me to do but to walk up to London, like Dick Whittington, and seek my fortune. I had not one penny; I slept in outhouses, and where I could: by the time I reached London, my clothes were in rags, and my shoes in holes. I did not beg, but applied at a workhouse for relief, and was transferred to the Refuge, where you found me.—That is my story, sir.'

Mr Blissett nodded, nursed his chin in his hand, and regarded his young friend attentively.

'I believe you have told me the truth,' said he at last.

'Indeed, I hope so, sir.'

'From Mr Madden's remark to you, Steen, I conclude you are something of a scholar. If I were engaged in collecting editions of the classics, you might be of great service to me; but as it is, I would rather you knew how to mix colours.'

'I am very sorry, sir, that I cannot make myself more useful to you. When you have done this sketch, it seems to me that my occupation is gone.'

'Well, perhaps it would have been but for this sad news from Allgrove; but it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and there will now be matters to arrange down there in which your assistance may be needed. I daresay the library is not catalogued, and there may be some other things to occupy you—for a week or two.'

'Very good, sir,' answered the other, but in a tone which hardly suited the words. When one has suffered hunger and cold, and then enjoyed warmth and comfort, the prospect of returning to the former state is not alluring. If Mr Frederick Blissett's manner was at times scornful, yet one proud man's contumely seemed easier to this poor young fellow to be borne than that long catalogue of whips and scorns to which indigence must needs submit from every hand, from every tongue.

'If I could count upon your fidelity, indeed,' continued Mr Blissett musing; 'but then I have only known you for twelve hours or so. If, as my confidential agent (so to speak) and companion—'

'O sir! I believe me!—'

'Hush! Let me finish. A companion, you know, Mr Steen, is generally an unhappy woman, who has to endure the whims and ill-temper of some old harridan; to feed her parrot, to take her lap-dog for a walk, and on Sundays to read sermons aloud until her mistress drops asleep. It is true, I have neither bird nor beast—I am lord neither of the fowl nor the brute—and I think I can promise you that you will not have to read me sermons; but as for whims, I have plenty of them. My temper, too, is not of the best, and what is worse, it is uncertain: the navigation is dangerous, and the channel is not buoyed. I am subject to "tantrums." Unfortunately, I don't swear, like Starke Madden, and therefore there is no safety-valve. I blow up. Beware, Charles Steen; never thwart me, never cross me, or it will be the worse for you. Do not venture to express an opinion when you know it will be distasteful to me. Do you understand, young sir?'

The very reference to his own irritability of disposition seemed to have driven Mr Blissett to the verge of a 'tantrum.' He spoke with hurried vehemence, his eyes converged in a most unpleasant manner, and he snapped the pencil with which he was working into half-a-dozen pieces, and threw them into the fire.

'I understand, sir, and will do my very best to please you,' returned the young man earnestly; 'but—'

"But" is a word I forbid you to use,' interrupted the painter peevishly. 'You say you will do your best, and that is sufficient. I take you at your word. Henceforward, you have no interest to serve, no orders to obey but mine; no human being to strive to please but me. You will have a hundred a year for pocket-money—for young men

must buy their pleasures—only look you well that yours never clash with duty, that is, your duty to me; all your expenses in other respects will of course be defrayed. Here is five pounds on account of the one, and five pounds on the other. You will undertake a journey for me at once—this afternoon. Take whatever you need of linen and clothes from my wardrobe, and put them in a portmanteau. You may be away some days—or weeks: I cannot tell.'

'Then you do not go with me, sir?'

'No,' answered the painter with irritation. 'Did I not tell you that I was too ill to leave the house? If not, I tell it you now, and mind, when you are asked, to answer as I tell you. I send you in my place because I am so indisposed; the doctor has forbidden me to stir abroad. Remember that.'

The young man bowed, and was about to leave the room. 'There is no "but," sir,' said he with his hand upon the door. 'I obey you, of course; yet I am sorry not to be permitted to shew my gratitude in nursing you. To be ill and alone is very sad.'

'Who told you that?' cried Mr Blissett, running up and seizing him by the arm. 'Who said it was sad to be alone? Did I complain? Yes, in my sleep I did: I talked some nonsense. Now, what was it?'

'You cried out, and struck your hand, sir. I noticed it was badly bruised this morning. That's all.'

'That's all? And enough too, I think. A spy? You noticed, did you? Henceforth, take note of nothing. What! you watch me, do you?'

'Indeed, I do not, sir. Only I was sorry you had hurt yourself, and would have said so, but that you seemed to dislike to be troubled by such questions.'

'Just so; I do. I don't want folk's pity. Of course, it's lonely being alone. That was one of the reasons why I brought you here—to keep me company. There, there; I daresay you meant no impertinence: it was but a trick of my whimsical temper to suppose you did. Go and pack your things. In the meantime, I have a letter to write, which will explain your coming, and contain your credentials. It will take me half an hour.'

In half an hour exactly, Charles Steen presented himself, equipped for travel, and portmanteau in hand.

Mr Blissett was in the parlour, very pale. He seemed to be much agitated.

'So you are going to leave me, are you, Steen?'

'Nay, sir; it is you who send me away.'

'True; but there is no hurry. There is plenty of time, is there not?'

'I do not know, sir. You have not told me when the train starts—or whence, or whether—which is to take me. It is now two o'clock.'

'Two? Why, that is lunch-time. You can't go without lunch;' and he hurriedly pulled the bell.

'Thank you, sir; I have made too good a breakfast to need anything at present. Shall I call a cab?'

'No, no; Mary will do that. You have got no railway wrapper, Steen; take one out of my bedroom. You will travel first-class, of course; but you will be starved of cold going over the downs.'

'The downs, sir? What downs?'

'Why, between Chudleigh—that's your station, you know—and Allgrove on the Rill.'

'Allgrove?'

'Yes, of course. You will take this letter, which explains everything; but you must also tell them much—how ill I have been, and how utterly prostrated I am by the news of this calamity.—Mary, fetch a cab—a Hansom.—Then you can drive quickly, and need not hurry away now. I am so nervous, that your departure quite upsets me. Give me a little glass of brandy. I rely upon you for every information. Send me word exactly how you find the wid—my sister-in-law. What she says about me, too. Do you hear? And what everybody says. I wish to hear all the news. You will, of course, say how dreadfully cut up I am at this lamentable occurrence. As to being of service to Christie, of course I am zealous, being her uncle; but I should likewise—and particularly—desire to make myself useful to Mrs Blissett. Do you understand?—Thousand devils, there's the cab! Upon my life, I think I will go down with you after all. But I can't—I can't.'

'I suppose, sir, if you feel better, you will come down to the funeral?'

'What?' Mr Blissett sank down in his arm-chair, breathing hard. 'How dare you? Seeing the state to which I am reduced. Be off! Why do you linger? You will miss the train.'

'You have forgotten to seal the letter, sir.'

'I did that on purpose. You may read it going along. You are my confidential friend, remember. The letter explains it all—except about my illness. Tell them how ill I was last night, and the night before, when this sad business happened.—Good-bye.'

The young man stepped forward, and took his patron's hand—it was cold and damp as a sponge.

THE LOST SHIP.

THE storm was gathering all the day; and in the bay, and in the bay
The white waves beat against the cliffs, and plunged upon the sands,
When distant reeling to the blasts, I saw the masts, I saw the masts
Of my good ship, as she came home from trade with foreign lands.

She had been away for many years, and I had fears, and I had fears
That she had struck some hidden reef, or sunk in deep mid seas;
But then against the sunset's track she heaved up black, she heaved up black,
As, lifted by the swell, she sprang careering to the breeze.

From out the sky the night dropt down on tide and town, on tide and town;
The light-house gave its cheery gleam; the lamps shone on the pier;
I took my coat, and ran amain through wind and rain, through wind and rain,
And waited with the crowd that stood prepared my ship to cheer.

The foul storm-wind blew loud and hard, the shipwright's yard, the shipwright's yard
Was all a-clatter as the spars and timbers rolled about; And from the tower on the rock, the harbour-clock, the harbour-clock
Caught up the hours as they came, and slowly tolled them out.

Then some ran home to fire and bed; and leaving, said, and leaving, said:

'The ship has anchored in the roads, for fear of wreck or harm.'

But others shook their heads, and cried: 'What, lose the tide! what, lose the tide! Her captain knows the coast as well as farmer knows his farm.'

Then in the lee of harbour-wall we crowded all, we crowded all,

And towards the restless roaring bay, our spray-swept eyes strained.

The air was full of dismal din—no ship came in, no ship came in—

Good luck, we scarce could see our hand, and how it blew and rained!

There came a little lull at last. Our hearts beat fast, our hearts beat fast,
For now we heard wild shouts of pain—of desperate, dying pain;

Then the quick sound of signal-gun, but only one, but only one;

And then the tempest loosed its strength, and thundered down again.

Till morning light we waited there, in silent prayer, in silent prayer;

And when the gray dawn came at last, broadening from less to more,

Each man caught other's hand in gripe—there was no ship, But scattered bales and spars were cast in heaps upon the shore.

The news went swiftly through the town; the folk ran down, the folk ran down,

Women and men, and children too, and stood in tears and dread,

As the ship's sailors washed ashore by three and four, by three and four;

And some were smiling as in dreams, but all were cold and dead.

The churchyard grave was broad and deep—well may you weep, well may you weep;

The ship and cargo both were lost; my loss had no compare

With those bereft ones whom I knew so loved the crew, so loved the crew,
All drowned that night in sight of home, no more to enter there.

And Death will come by land or sea to you and me, to you and me;

Then wisely let us do our work, and well our time employ.

My tale, I pray you, ponder yet, and ready get, and ready get

To go away, when you are called, with fearlessness and joy.

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